



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Patricia A. Rehmer, MSN
Commissioner

Memorandum:

TO: Senator Gerratana
Representative Johnson
Members of the Public Health Committee

FROM: Commissioner Patricia Rehmer, DMHAS

DATE: March 19, 2014

SUBJECT: Written Testimony on Senate Bill 417 and SWB 471

Good Morning Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. I am Commissioner Patricia Rehmer of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), and I want to thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on SB 417 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF PSYCHIATRIC AND SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT SERVICES and SB 471 AN ACT CONCERNING MENTAL HEALTH AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES. I want to thank the Committee for giving me the opportunity to address you on these bills.

DMHAS supports the concept outlined in SB 417 which would allow a psychiatric or substance use outpatient clinic to provide services off site to individuals needing behavioral health care. This concept will allow for individuals in nursing homes or other health care settings that cannot get to the clinic, to continue to receive their behavioral health services without an interruption of the clinician/patient therapeutic relationship. We understand that there may need to be some changes made to the language in order to satisfy the Department of Public Health's regulatory requirements and we would support any efforts made to make this concept a reality.

DMHAS does have concerns regarding SB 471. Section 4 in the bill would mandate that DMHAS, in consultation with DCF, provide timely access to regional behavioral consultation and care coordination services for primary care providers who serve all young adults. First, DMHAS already administers a website to provide centralized behavioral health care information and assistance to the public, which can be utilized by primary care providers. Second, regarding patient care coordination and transitional services, DMHAS currently provides these services through Local Mental Health Authorities to unentitled or underinsured young adults with serious behavioral health disorders who

are referred from DCF. We do not have the resources to expand those services to young adults who have private insurance.

Currently, DMHAS serves approximately 18,000 young adults with behavioral health needs in our state and private, not-for-profit provider system. We have a sizable budget of over 79 million dollars to serve young adults referred from DCF and other funding in our grant accounts to serve young adults that come in for behavioral health services through the front door.

We are also not sure of the intent in section 5 of the bill but believe it may be duplicative of efforts already available that provide information regarding access to care. As mentioned above, in 2005 the legislature enacted PA 05-80 which provided DMHAS with funding to develop a web site to provide behavioral health care information and assistance. This web site is called the "Network of Care" and it is a single resource web site that provides timely access to behavioral health care information and assistance for children, adolescents and adults. The website includes (1) directory information on available federal, state, regional and community assistance, programs, services and providers; (2) current mental health diagnoses and treatment options; (3) links to national and state advocacy organizations, including legal assistance; and (4) summary information on federal and state mental health law, including private insurance coverage. The website also has an optional, secure personal folder for web site users to manage information concerning their individual mental health care and assistance. The Network of Care site is updated on a regular basis by information provided by 211. We contract with 211 to provide change files to Network of Care on a monthly basis.

Thank you for your time and attention to these matters.